

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CABINET  
MONDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2002 AT 2.00PM

Agenda Item No:  
other part 1  
business

**A**

**LETTER FROM STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR SUE MYSON)  
DATED 1 FEB 2002**

*Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families*

Author:- Martin Surtees, Assistant Director - Resources, 01992 555710

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The attached letter (which is dated February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002) formally notifies the County Council that the Borough Council will discontinue its funding for a number of activities which are CSF related, with effect from April 2002. This report provides details of the impact of this decision.

**2. Issues**

2.1 School Milk (£132,600)

The background is that, when entitlement to school milk was withdrawn nationally in the 1970s, the County Council decided to retain school milk only for Infant and Special school children. They also decided to charge parents for the milk provided (with a scheme of remission for children entitled to Free School Meals).

In the case of the District Councils in Watford and Stevenage, however, it was decided that they would finance the provision of FREE milk to all Infant, Special and Junior pupils. Watford withdrew this arrangement a few years ago, and now Stevenage are following suit.

The following table summaries the impact of this decision:

	PRESENT POSITION (Stevenage Scheme)	FUTURE POSITION (as elsewhere in County)
Infant & Special	All Pupils receive free milk	Pupils entitled to free meals receive free milk. Otherwise parents pay
Junior	All Pupils receive free milk	No pupils receive milk

- 2.2 Residential holidays for socially disadvantaged children, Special needs holiday play schemes, Integration of Children with Special Needs into Play centres

The current Stevenage schemes operate independently of CSF planning mechanisms but do provide a valuable service to children and families living in the Borough.

- 2.3 Residential holidays for disadvantaged children (£4,000)

Applications are made directly by schools and CSF service, therefore, has no specific information on the criteria for selection or details of which children (or group of children) have benefited from this provision. Officers are contacting Stevenage to establish further details.

- 2.4 Special Needs Holiday Playschemes (£8,610)

This provision is part of the Borough's provision of holiday playschemes. We understand that parents refer themselves directly to the scheme. Consequently, we have no specific information as to who would be affected by this proposal.

- 2.5 Integration of children with SEN into play centres (£10,500)

This fund involves the provision of 1:1 support for individual children in addition to that already provided through the Pre-School Advisory Teacher Service. Any change of arrangements would require careful planning and liaison so that individual children's current placements are not jeopardised.

- 2.6 Youth Nuisance (£15,000)

This is a joint project operated with the Youth Service, which complements the existing Youth Service commitment in the town.

Given that there has been uncertainty over the financial commitment from the Borough for some time, the part-time staff who were employed as part of this project are no longer employed.

The project consisted of the Youth Service, through its local manager in Stevenage, setting up a Youth Nuisance project under which Stevenage funded part-time staff expenditure of £15,000 and the Youth Service provided full-time staff resources to manage and contribute to the project.

The Youth Service remains committed to detached youth work and has been making scaled-down provision in the town.

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 It is regrettable that Stevenage has taken these decisions without consultation or discussion.
- 3.2 All the issues raised above will need to take into account the impact of the changes on the lives of children and families in Stevenage. The Authority's response must reflect the financial resources available to the County Council, and by the need to avoid disruption and discontinuity in the provision of services to families in Stevenage. In this respect the late notification of these changes makes the situation challenging.

*Background information referred to by the author whilst compiling this report*

If you wish to know more about the issues covered in this report please contact Martin Surtees, telephone no. 01992 555710.